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The Oral History of Anthropology: Do-It-Yourself

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Box #24 contains Dr. White's fieldnotes on the Pueblos, in the form of dated handwritten entries in lined paper journals or notebooks. Easily legible, they include material on kinship, family relations, economic conditions, religious beliefs, artifact descriptions, and incidental information collected between 1923 and 1957 at Acoma, Hopi, Laguna, Santa Ana, Sia, Santo Domingo, Santana, San Felipe, Taos and Zuni. They are quite candid, with references to specific named informants--which may account for their having been sealed until now.

Box #18 contains materials of a personal nature. These include journals and diaries kept by Dr. White, somewhat sporadically, from 1918 until his death. The contents are rather varied, and include appointment books and a book of birthdays he wished to remember, as well as long dissertations on life, as he viewed it. Some of the more interesting entries discuss his dealings with other anthropologists and with administrators at the University of Michigan. Although White was a popular and stimulating teacher (who in 1950 attracted 350 students to a course called "The Mind of Primitive Man"), his material and his approach to it often made administrators uncomfortable. White's frustration over this seeming contradiction between student popularity and administrative disapproval makes interesting reading.

These two boxes also include class notes from courses White took with Fay-Cooper Cole and some notes on Morgan and Bandelier.

The Bentley Library now has in its possession my rather extensive analysis and indexing of White's papers, so that it is possible for researchers to write to the Library and find out if there is material relevant to their interests. I would also be happy to supply any additional information that I can.

III. The Oral History of Anthropology: Do-it-Yourself

Robert Ehrich, William Fenton, John Fox and Richard Woodbury have set in motion a program to collect oral historical materials through the self-interviews of anthropologists who feel that they have interesting reminiscent material to preserve. The idea is that they will record these themselves, and send copies of the tapes to Herman J. Viola, the director of the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560, where they will be permanently archived. Tapes should be accompanied by an identification sheet giving the name and address of the interviewer/ee, along with the names of persons mentioned prominently on the tapes, as well as other materials that seem appropriate (e.g., a written resume or biobibliography). A checklist of possible interview topics is included in the article describing the project in the Anthropology Newsletter, April 1985. A fuller checklist is available from Ehrich (Box 175, Fitzwilliam, NH 03447. It is also hoped to collect an inventory of existing taped materials, wherever they exist.